

AMENDED CLAIM SET

The claims have been amended as follows:

1. (Currently Amended) A paper separator, comprising: ~~comprising~~:
one or more ~~paper-separating~~ finger bodies, provided at or near one or more upstream ends in one or more paper transport directions of at least one or more of the paper-separating ~~fingers~~ finger bodies, and capable of abutting one or more photosensitive bodies;
one or more guide members, provided at or near one or more downstream ends in one or more paper transport directions of at least one of the paper-separating ~~fingers~~ finger bodies, and capable of touching so as to guide one or more sheets of paper which has or have separated from at least one or more photosensitive bodies; and
one or more support components pivotably supporting at least one or more of the paper-separating ~~fingers~~ finger bodies so as to impart one or more restoring forces thereto urging at least one of the paper-separating ~~fingers~~ finger bodies to, under the force of its own weight, bring at least one or more of the ~~paper-separating~~ finger bodies into abutting engagement with at least one or more photosensitive bodies, so as to, when at least one of the guide member or members is touching at least one of the sheet or sheets of paper, cause at least one of the finger bodies to at least partially overcome one or more restoring forces produced by the weight of at least a portion of at least one of the paper-separating ~~fingers~~ finger bodies and back off from at least one or more photosensitive bodies.

2. (Currently Amended) A paper separator according to claim 1 wherein:

at least one of the support component or components is disposed between at least one of the guide member or members and at least one or more of the ~~paper-separating~~ finger bodies of the paper-separating fingers.

3. (Currently Amended) A paper separator equipped with at least two paper-separating fingers ~~finger bodies~~ for separating one or more sheets of paper and abutting and/or backed off from one or more photosensitive bodies, the paper separator comprising:

at least two finger bodies, provided at or near one or more upstream ends in one or more paper transport directions of at least two of the paper-separating fingers ~~finger bodies~~, and capable of abutting at least one of the photosensitive body or bodies;

one or more guide members, provided at or near one or more downstream ends in one or more paper transport directions of at least two of the paper-separating fingers, and capable of touching so as to guide one or more sheets of paper which has or have separated from at least one of the photosensitive body or bodies; and

one or more support components pivotably supporting at least two of the paper-separating fingers so as to impart one or more restoring forces thereto urging at least one of the paper-separating fingers to, under the force of its own weight, bring at least two of the ~~paper-separating~~ finger bodies into abutting engagement with at least one of the photosensitive body or bodies, and so as to, when at least one of the guide member or members is touching at least one of the sheet or sheets of paper, cause at least one of the paper-separating fingers ~~finger bodies~~ to at least partially overcome one or more restoring forces produced by the weight of at least a portion of at

least one of the paper-separating ~~fingers~~finger-bodies and back off from at least one of the photosensitive body or bodies wherein:

at least two of the paper-separating ~~fingers~~finger-bodies are arranged alongside at least one of the photosensitive body or bodies in one or more directions perpendicular to one or more paper transport directions;

operations bringing respective finger bodies into and out of abutting engagement with at least one of the photosensitive body or bodies being carried out ~~independently~~in mutually independent fashion.

4. (Currently Amended) A paper separator equipped with at least two paper-separating ~~fingers~~finger-bodies for separating one or more sheets of paper and abutting and/or backed off from one or more photosensitive bodies, the paper separator comprising:

at least two finger bodies, provided at or near one or more upstream ends in one or more paper transport directions of at least two of the paper-separating ~~fingers~~finger-bodies, and capable of abutting at least one of the photosensitive body or bodies;

one or more guide members, provided at or near one or more downstream ends in one or more paper transport directions of at least two of the paper-separating ~~fingers~~finger-bodies, and capable of touching so as to guide one or more sheets of paper which has or have separated from at least one of the photosensitive body or bodies; and

one or more support components pivotably supporting at least two of the paper-separating ~~fingers~~finger-bodies so as to impart one or more restoring forces thereto urging at least one of the paper-separating ~~fingers~~finger-bodies to, under the force of its own weight, bring at least two of

the ~~paper-separating~~ finger bodies into abutting engagement with at least one of the photosensitive body or bodies, and so as to, when at least one of the guide member or members is touching at least one of the sheet or sheets of paper, cause at least one of the paper-separating fingers ~~finger bodies~~ to at least partially overcome one or more restoring forces produced by the weight of at least a portion of at least one of the paper-separating finger fingers ~~bodies~~ and back off from at least one of the photosensitive body or bodies wherein:

at least two of the paper-separating fingers ~~finger bodies~~ are arranged alongside at least one of the photosensitive body or bodies in one or more directions perpendicular to one or more paper transport directions;

operations bringing respective finger bodies into and out of abutting engagement with at least one of the photosensitive body or bodies being carried out cooperatively ~~in mutually cooperative fashion~~.

5. (Currently Amended) A paper separator according to claim 4 wherein:

each of at least two of the paper-separating fingers ~~finger bodies~~ has at least one of the support components; and

operations bringing at least a portion of the finger bodies of the at least two paper-separating fingers ~~finger bodies~~ into and out of abutting engagement with at least one of the photosensitive body or bodies are carried out in mutual cooperation due to action of one or more shafts mutually connecting at least a portion of the support components of the at least two paper-separating fingers ~~finger bodies~~.

6. (Currently Amended) A paper separator according to claim 1 wherein:

~~at least one of the support component or components of the one or more paper-separating fingers~~ finger bodies is disposed at one or more locations such as will cause at least one amount by which at least one of the ~~paper-separating~~ finger bodies moves in one or more directions of engagement with and/or retraction from at least one of the photosensitive body or bodies to be less than at least one amount by which at least one of the guide member or members moves when it touches at least one of the sheet or sheets of paper.

7. (Previously Presented) A paper separator according to claim 1 wherein:

at least one of the guide member or members is at least partially formed from at least one material of the same charge polarity as that of at least one toner used to develop at least one latent electrostatic image on at least one of the photosensitive body or bodies.

8. (Currently Amended) A paper separator according to claim 1 wherein:

at least one of the paper-separating ~~fingers~~ finger bodies is at least partially formed from at least one material of the same charge polarity as that of at least one toner used to develop at least one latent electrostatic image on at least one of the photosensitive body or bodies.

9. (Currently Amended) A paper separator according to claim 1 wherein:

employed as at least one of the guide member or members there are one or more star-ring-type spurs rotatably supported at or near one or more downstream ends in one or more paper transport directions of at least one of the paper-separating ~~fingers~~ finger bodies.

10. (Currently Amended) A paper separator according to claim 1, further comprising:
one or more electrostatic clinging prevention means for, during operations bringing at least one of the ~~paper-separating~~ finger bodies of at least one of the paper-separating fingers ~~finger bodies~~ into and out of abutting engagement with at least one of the photosensitive body or bodies, at least partially preventing electrostatic clinging between at least one of the paper-separating fingers ~~finger bodies~~ and one or more members coming in contact with at least one of the paper-separating fingers ~~finger bodies~~.

11. (Currently Amended) A paper separator according to claim 10 wherein:
at least one of the electrostatic clinging prevention means is at least one of the paper-separating fingers ~~finger bodies~~, or at least one of the member or members coming in contact with at least one of the paper-separating fingers ~~finger bodies~~, or both at least one of the paper-separating fingers ~~finger bodies~~ and at least one of the member or members coming in contact with at least one of the paper-separating fingers ~~finger bodies~~, is or are formed from one or more antistatic materials.

12. (Currently Amended) A paper separator according to claim 10 wherein:
at least one of the electrostatic clinging prevention means is one or more antistatic treatments have been applied to at least one of the paper-separating fingers ~~finger bodies~~, or at least one of the member or members coming in contact with at least one of the paper-separating fingers ~~finger bodies~~, or both at least one of the paper-separating fingers ~~finger bodies~~ and at least

one of the member or members coming in contact with at least one of the paper-separating fingers~~finger~~-bodies.

13. (Currently Amended) A paper separator according to claim 10 wherein:

at least one of the electrostatic clinging prevention means is at least one surface resistance of at least one of the paper-separating fingers~~finger~~-bodies, or at least one of the member or members coming in contact with at least one of the paper-separating fingers~~finger~~-bodies, and at least one of the member or members coming in contact with at least one of the paper-separating fingers~~finger~~-bodies, is or are set to at least one value which is not more than $10^{13} \Omega$.

14. (Currently Amended) A paper separator according to claim 10 wherein:

at least one of the electrostatic clinging prevention means is one or more charge-removing members are provided in the vicinity or vicinities of one or more regions where at least one of the paper-separating fingers~~finger~~-bodies comes in contact with at least one of the member or members coming in contact with at least one of the paper-separating fingers~~finger~~-bodies.

15. (Currently Amended) A processor cartridge provided with at least one paper separator according to claim 1 for one or more image forming apparatuses;

at least one of the paper-separating fingers~~finger~~-bodies and at least one of the photosensitive body or bodies being constructed so as to permit installation and removal in integral fashion with respect to at least one of the image forming apparatus or apparatuses.

16. (Currently Amended) A processor cartridge for one or more image forming apparatuses and provided with at least one paper separator according to claim 15;

at least one of the photosensitive body or bodies being constructed so as to permit installation and/or removal thereof with respect to at least one of the paper-separating ~~fingers~~finger-bodies; and

when at least one of the processor cartridge or cartridges is made to assume at least one orientation permitting installation and/or removal of at least one of the photosensitive body or bodies, at least one of the paper-separating ~~fingers~~finger-bodies is acted upon by one or more restoring forces produced by the force of its own weight and causing at least one of the finger bodies to back off from at least one of the photosensitive body or bodies.

17. (Currently Amended) A paper separator according to claim 2 wherein:

at least two of the paper-separating ~~fingers~~finger-bodies are arranged alongside at least one of the photosensitive body or bodies in one or more directions perpendicular to one or more paper transport directions;

operations bringing respective finger bodies into and out of abutting engagement with at least one of the photosensitive body or bodies being carried out ~~independently in mutually~~independent fashion.

18. (Currently Amended) A paper separator according to claim 2 wherein:

at least two of the paper-separating ~~fingers~~finger-bodies are arranged alongside at least one of the photosensitive body or bodies in one or more directions perpendicular to one or more paper transport directions;

operations bringing respective finger bodies into and out of abutting engagement with at least one of the photosensitive body or bodies being carried out ~~cooperatively~~in mutually cooperative fashion.

19. (Currently Amended) A paper separator according to claim 11 wherein:

at least one of the electrostatic clinging prevention means is the fact that at least one surface resistance of at least one of the paper-separating ~~fingers~~finger-bodies, or at least one of the member or members coming in contact with at least one of the paper-separating ~~fingers~~finger-bodies, or both at least one of the paper-separating ~~fingers~~finger-bodies and at least one of the member or members coming in contact with at least one of the paper-separating ~~fingers~~finger-bodies, is or are set to at least one value which is not more than $10^{13} \Omega$.

20. (Currently Amended) A paper separator according to claim 12 wherein:

at least one of the electrostatic clinging prevention means is at least one surface resistance of at least one or more of the paper-separating ~~fingers~~finger-bodies, or at least one of the member or members coming in contact with at least one or more of the paper-separating ~~fingers~~finger-bodies, or both at least one of the paper-separating ~~fingers~~finger-bodies and at least one of the

member or members coming in contact with at least one of the paper-separating ~~fingers~~finger
~~bodies~~, is or are set to at least one value which is not more than $10^{13} \Omega$.